1024-0018 EXP 12.31.84

**United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service** 

For HCRS use only

received NOV 2 6 1980

date entered

### **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

1. Nan	s—complete applican			
historic	Ashpole Presbyt	erian Church	<del></del>	
and/or common				
2. Loc	ation Nulo	1 Rosseand OF	1 SR 1138	
street & numbe	North side SR 1	Rowland Of 138, 0.2 mi. South o	f jct./NC 130	not for publication
city, town Ro	wland vie.	X vicinity of	congressional district	Seventh
state North	Carolina	code 037 count	Robeson	code 115
3. Clas	sification			
Category district X building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considere N/A	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted X no	entertainment government	museum park private residence X religious scientific transportation other:
4. Owr	ner of Prop	erty		
name Rev.	Russell Park, Mir	nister	Mr. D. L. McLaurin,	Clerk of the Session
street & number	r East Main Stree	et	Ashpole Presbyteria	n Church
city, town Ro	wland	vicinity of	state	North Carolina 2838
5. Loc	ation of Le	gal Descript	ion	
		Robeson County Courth	ouse	
street & number				North Carolina
city, town	Lumber		state	NOTEII CATOTIIIA
6. Rep	resentatio	n in Existing	Surveys	
title	N/A	has this p	property been determined e	elegible? yes _X no
date			federal sta	ate county local
depository for s	survey records	N/A		
city, town			state	

### 7. Description

Condition  X excellent deteriorated  good ruins  fair unexposed	Check one unaltered X altered	Check one X original site moved date	
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#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Ashpole Presbyterian Church is a large, wooden frame structure in the Greek Revival style situated in rural farmland about three miles west of the town of Rowland, North Carolina. One first glimpses the octagonal belfry with its concave cap roof rising above a grove of trees. The belfry rests on a tall, square base set just behind the south gable end of the structure. The main facade, facing south, is three bays wide with a central door on the first story flanked by windows containing nine-over-nine sash. On the second level three windows with six-over-nine sash are ranked above the openings of the principal story. A round window with a sunburst blind is centered in the pediment.

Until 1929 there were two portals on the south facade. These were removed and the present central door was installed. No other alterations to the design of the church are apparent.

The east and west sides of the church are five bays in extent with windows, nine-over-nine on the first story and six-over-nine on the second, giving a severe and classical aspect to the structure. Louvered blinds are installed at each window and appear to be original to the 1860 construction.

The southern fenestration on the east wall contains a door opening onto a flight of stairs leading up to the gallery. This door is said to have been used by slaves attending services. It is perhaps a unique survival of antebellum design in church architecture.

Beyond the entrance is a small vestibule extending across the front of the church. An interior stair rises to the balcony through a small door in the west wall. The two front windows and one west window light the space. Two pair of double doors, in line with the original exterior portals, lead into the body of the church. The doors are flat-paneled and have typically Greek Revival moldings. The door casings are severe and plain.

The main room in the church is a large auditorium with balconies on three sides supported on delicate Doric style columns. The ceiling of the church and the undersides of the balconies, as well as the wainscot, are finished in wide pine boards, painted white. The center portion of the room is occupied by ten rows of pews. A double aisle separates these from sections of pews along the east and west walls.

At the north end of the church is a pulpit in classical Greek Revival style shaped like a wide "U". Behind it are three Victorian Gothic chairs flanked by candle stands on which are branched gas lamps of ornate design. The lamps have been recently electrified. Other lighting systems in the room are modern.

The pews on the main level of the church were originally enclosed with doors, since removed. The pew ends are treated with scroll arm rests. Those on the balcony level are simple benches.

Two pair of doors, on either side of the pulpit, lead to a modern educational building containing a large lounge, library, restrooms and offices on the first floor and seven classrooms on the dormered second level.

### 8. Significance

1700–1799 _X 1800–1899	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture X architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement industry	landscape architecture law literature military music philosophy politics/government	science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation
Specific dates	1860	invention  Builder/Architect	Unknown	other (specify)
	. TOOA		O TTTATE O AN IT	

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Ashpole Presbyterian Church is among the finest of the Greek Revival Presbyterian Churches erected by the Scots Presbyterians who dominated Southeastern North Carolina. The directness and simplicity of the pedimented frame structure characterize regional adaptation of the Greek Revival mode. Ashpole, a congregation established in the late 18th century is parent church to a number of churches in the region and the focus of historical attention in the community.

#### Criteria Assessment:

- A. Associated with importance of Presbyterian Church as cultural focal point in Scots settlement of Southeastern North Carolina.
- C. Exemplifies in well-preserved form an unknown carpenter's version of the Greek Revival style into a simple frame pedimented church; one of a number of notable Greek Revival churches in Southeastern North Carolina.

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. (	Geograpi	nical Data	ADECOVER.				
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List all sta	ates and counties	s for properties overla	pping state	e or count	y boundaries		
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state		code	county			code	
11. F	orm Pre	pared By			-		
name/title	Architectura	l description: rberg, Consultant			cal Stateme		
	Survey and	Planning Branch					
organization		y and Historic Pre			September,	1980	
street & nur	mber 109 E. Jo	sion of Archives a nes Street	ild filstor	teleph	one (919) 7	33-6545	
city or town	Raleigh			state	North Caro	lina 2761	1
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To the west of the church building is the Manse, a one-and-a-half story structure of generous size and classical proportions. The house is in three parts: the central block being a five-bay central hall building; the additional sections being one-room wings, originally separated from the main block by the front porch wrapping around the east and west facades. The wings are now a unit with the main block, although the exterior weatherboards are intact in the enclosed spaces.

The manse has a long, low gable roof running east-west (at right angles to the church roof), a chimney at the east end of the east wing room and two chimneys rising out of the main ridge. Architectural features on the exterior are subdued, with only the transomed and side-lit entrance door and low-silled six-over-six windows emphasizing the Greek Revival of the house. The corner boards are interesting vernacular treatments with an odd paneled section between the pilasters and the frieze.

In plan, the manse is a central hall house with double rooms on the east and the west and one-room wings abutting the side porches. The original design of the building has been considerably altered since its construction date after 1860. The west wall of the central hall has been removed, extending the west room into three bays. The wings have been attached through small ante rooms, and the rear of the house has had an addition of two bedrooms, bath and screened porch appended to the north side. All the fireplaces in the rooms are twentieth century and the only remaining original fabric exists in the floors, windows and some doors.

Behind the manse is a small two-story barn with detailing similar to the manse, and a square, hip-roofed well house between the barn and the church.

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Ashpole Presbyterian Church of southwestern Robeson County takes its name from the Ashpole community, a settlement of Scottish, Welch, and English pioneers dating from shortly before the Revolutionary War. The origin of the name Ashpole is not definitely known, but it is thought to have come from the bridges of ashpoles constructed by the early settler John Cade across the races to his mill in the area. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Ashpole community encompassed a substantial portion of the present Robeson County, together with a contiguous section of South Carolina as well.

In 1796 the church was first organized at its present location, the outgrowth of two nearby churches organized prior to 1790: the Ashpole Meeting House, founded by Jacob Alford and used as a union center of worship by Presbyterians and Methodists, and the Shoe Heel Creek Presbyterian Church. The original log church at the present site was erected about two and a half miles south of the Ashpole Meeting House on a one and a half acre plot of land donated by Othneil Traywick by deed of 2 January 1796.

During the early years in its present location, the small congregation at Ashpole only rarely received the services of an ordained minister. In 1803, however, the Rev. Malcolm McNair was assigned to charges at Ashpole, Center, and Laurel Hill churches, and with his arrival there spread through the area's Presbyterian faithful a new sense of organization and permanence. The Reverend Mr. McNair both approved of and participated in the powerful religious movement of the early nineteenth century known as the Great Revival, making it a part of the church life at Ashpole. His formative ministry of nearly two decades was terminated by his death in 1822, at the age of forty-six.

From the death of the Rev. Mr. McNair until 1862, Ashpole was served by at least nine different ministers, none of whose tenure was of long duration. During the last of these brief ministries, that of the Rev. James Sinclair (1857-1862), the present church building was erected. It replaced a more modest frame structure which had, in turn, replaced the original log church at some point during the first half of the nineteenth century, and which had been located just in front of the present church. Begun in 1860 and used as a house of worship during the Civil War, it was finally completed shortly after the war's end. By perpetual lease of 4 January 1861, and in recognition of the new church being built, the trustees and congregation of Ashpole received from Jacob Alford six and three quarter acres of land in addition to the original Traywick plot.<sup>4</sup>

In 1862 the Rev. Archibald McQueen began a ministry which was to last for fourteen years. Despite the troubles of war and Reconstruction, however, the Ashpole congregation experienced considerable growth under McQueen's leadership. It is reported that the Rev. Mr. McQueen was also a resident of the Ashpole community during at least a part of his ministry and that, in the absence of a manse, he constructed a dwelling house near the church. 5

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From 1876 to 1884 Ashpole was served by at least two ministers as stated supplies and had about 250 communicants. Following the arrival of the Rev. Joseph Evans in 1884, however, the congregation enjoyed a period of vigorous growth. Between 1885 and 1890 the number of communicants rose from 250 to 400. Ashpole continued to grow and strengthen under the Rev. Mr. Evan's leadership until his resignation in 1894.

Between 1894 and 1913 the congregation was ably served by three ministers; but the next truly outstanding and influential ministry was that of the Rev. H. J. Mills from 1913 to 1918. Under his leadership the church made substantial progress in almost every area of its activity, especially in placing its financial affairs on a firm and business-like footing. It was probably due to his ministrations among the sick of his congregation during the great flu epidemic of 1918, that the Rev. Mr. Mills died that year at age forty-four.

Several men occupied the pulpit at Ashpole after the death of the Rev. Mr. Mills, with Rev. J<sub>9</sub> M. Lemmon serving the congregation through the depths of the Great Depression.

By the 1950s the size of the Ashpole congregation was in decline. From 1953 to 1963 the number of communicants fell from 249 to 185.10

Since 1967, the scarcity of available ministers, inadequate financial resources, and continuing low membership have brought about a close interdependence and cooperation between Ashpole and the Rowland Presbyterian Church.  $^{11}$ 

#### Improvements to Buildings

Several significant changes and improvements have been made in the present church building since its erection in the early 1860s. In the 1920s the entrance was altered so as to provide a single set of doors at the center leading directly into the church. The original construction had featured a vestibule with two doors on the front of the church and two corresponding doors leading from the vestibule into the sanctuary, one for men and the other for women. When the single entrance was first installed, a portion of the vestibule was removed; but the vestibule was restored to its original dimensions in 1961.

In 1947 the heating system in the church was improved by the removal of two large coal stoves and the installation of a gas furnace. Air conditioning was installed in 1963. The first electric organ was placed in the church in 1954.14

At a session meeting of 12 March 1959, a member of the congregation was "appointed to investigate the matter of making repairs to the church building." 15 Within two years this initiative had grown into a major renovation program. Between the summer of 1961 and the summer of 1962 the following improvements were accomplished: the steeple repaired and the roof strengthened and recovered, a furnace room built and a hot air system installed, windows repaired, screened, and weather stripped, front walls of the restored, new organ and chimes installed, and the sanctuary painted and carpeted. More recently, in 1971, the exterior of shutters were installed on the windows. 16

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The manse, which stands just beside the church, is said to have been constructed during the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Evans (1884-1894). The structure may have been built slightly prior to the Rev. Evan's arrival, however. At a session meeting of 19 January 1878, it was "resolved that steps be taken to build a manse for our minister /Dr. C. M. Shepperson, stated supply for one year/ at as early a date as may be practicable." Unfortunately, the church records made no further reference to the construction of the manse; but it is significant to note that when the calls from the churches of Iona and Ashpole were officially received by the Presbytery of Fayetteville in the spring of 1885, the Ashpole congregation agreed to pay the Reverend Mr. Evans a salary of \$900, "with the use of the manse," for "preaching on the forenoon of four Sabbaths of each month." The next mention of the manse among the records of the church does not occur until 1 September of 1901, at which time the "Rev. W. T. Walker requested that he be permitted to take charge of the manse and rent it out on such terms as may be agreeable to him."

Church records shed little light on the changes which have been made to the manse since its completion in the early or mid-1880s, although it is evident that major repairs, alterations, and improvements have been made from time to time. In both 1903 and 1905 committees were appointed to investigate needed repairs. In 1942, a bequest of \$500 was made to the church for repairs to the manse, but the records do not indicate the nature of the repairs.

In addition to the church and manse, the educational annex is an important part of the worship complex. Study classes for young people had begun in the early years of the nineteenth century, but Sunday school as such does not appear to have been instituted until the 1840s, and even then only during the summer months until the installation of stoves in the church during the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Evans (1884-1894). In 1936, however, it was reported that "a commodious Sunday School building had just been completed." This frame building, popularly known as "The Hut," stood just to the right of the church. There it served as a Sunday school until December of 1949, when it was sold and moved to adjoining property for use as a private residence. In proceeds from the sale of "The Hut" were applied at once to the construction and completed in February of 1950 at a cost of \$15,469, stands as an annex to the rear of the church. In 1968, nearly two decades after the sale of "The Hut" and its conversion into a private residence, the Ashpole congregation repurchased the old structure (since removed) together with the 1.3 acres upon which it stood.

Situated just across from the church on the south side of SR 1138 is the Ashpole Cemetery, which is owned by the church and has been in continuous use since the Civil War. This cemetery is the successor to a much earlier one about a quarter mile from the church, known formerly as the Ashpole burial ground and subsequently as the Alford or Fulmore Cemetery. The present cemetery encompasses 1.7 acres which, after more than three decades of use, were conveyed by N. T. Alford and wife to a group of trustees

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for the cemetery in 1898.<sup>23</sup> Nearly fifty years later, in 1946, the cemetery property was conveyed to the trustees of Ashpole Church itself, with its area remaining at 1.7 acres.<sup>24</sup> Since 1957 burials in the cemetery have been subject to restrictions due to the shortage of space.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout its long existence as a center of worship in southwestern Robeson County, Ashpole has spawned the development of several other Presbyterian churches in the area in both North and South Carolina, the earliest being Little Pee Dee Church in 1829. Subsequent churches more or less formed out of the Ashpole congregation have included Carolina (1849), Lebanon (1850), Iona (1870), Kentyre (1871), Montpelier (1880), Midway (1889), Hamer (1891), Rowland (1902), Fairmont (1902), and McNair Memorial (1910).

In recent years the members of the congregation at Ashpole have grown increasingly aware of the proud heritage and historical significance of their church. Guest registers, first placed in the vestibule in March of 1954, now record the names of numerous visitors from other states and nations. Moreover, since October of 1963, articles of historical interest pertaining to the church have been kept on display in the vestibule. <sup>27</sup>

The structures of course are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structures. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archeological record. Therefore, archeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any developement of the property.

#### **FOOTNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>C. J. McCallum and Lucia Mae McCallum (compilers), Historical Sketch Ashpole Presbyterian Church Rowland, North Carolina, 1796-1971 (N.p.: 1971), 3, hereinafter cited as McCallum, Historical Sketch.

<sup>2</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 3-6; William C. Harlee, <u>Kinfolks</u>: A Genealogical and <u>Biographical Record</u>, 3 vols. (New Orleans: Searcy and <u>Pfaff</u>, 1934-1937), 1154-1157; and <u>Robeson County Deeds</u>, Book Q, 435, microfilm copy at North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Robeson County Deeds, with appropriate book and page numbers.

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<sup>3</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 7-8; and Harlee, <u>Kinfolks</u>, 1156. It was also during McNair's ministry that the Presbytery of Fayetteville was formed from that of Orange, with Ashpole being one of its thirty churches and McNair one of its nine ministers. See Jethro Rumple, <u>The History of Presbyterianism in North Carolina</u> (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary of Virginia, 1966. Reprinted from the <u>North Carolina Presbyterian</u>, 1878-1887), 30.

4McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 12-13; and Robeson County Deeds, Book EE, 426.

McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 9-10. The exact location of this house is not given; but it was the same house later owned by the prominent elder, N. T. Alford.

<sup>6</sup>Robeson County Churches. Ashpole Presbyterian Church, Rowland, N.C. Minutes, Registers, and Session Books, 1815-1966, microfilm copies in North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Ashpole Church Records. See, for example, the number of communicants listed for 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883.

 $^{7}\!\!$  Ashpole Church Records, membership figures from 1885 to 1894; and McCallum, Historical Sketch, 11.

<sup>8</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 11-12.

<sup>9</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 12, 21, and 35.

 $^{10}$ Ashpole Records, membership figures from 1953 to 1963.

<sup>11</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 27-28 and 35. The shared ministry begun in 1967 is the first at Ashpole since 1922.

<sup>12</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 13. For a photograph of the church prior to this change, see McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, Preface.

<sup>13</sup>McCallum, Historical Sketch, 26.

<sup>14</sup>McCallum, Historical Sketch, 22-26.

<sup>15</sup>Ashpole Church Records, minutes of session meeting of 12 March 1959.

16 McCallum, Historical Sketch, 25-29; and Ashpole Church Records, passim.

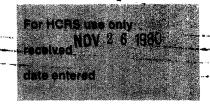
<sup>17</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 10-11. For photograph of the manse see inside back cover.

<sup>18</sup>Ashpole Church Records, minutes of session meeting of 19 January 1878.

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19 Presbyterian Church. Presbytery of Fayetteville. Minutes of the One Hundred and Forty-Fourth Sessions (1885) (Fayetteville: J. E. Garrett, 1885), 6 and 15. It is unclear whether the Rev. Evans began his pastorate in 1884 of 1885. Perhaps his appointment was temporary until 1885.

<sup>20</sup>Ashpole Church Records, minutes of session meeting of 1 September 1901. The request was granted. A later entry of 19 May 1906 reveals that the Rev. Walker had, for some time, been renting the manse on a yearly basis to deacon Alexander McKenzie and his family. For a list of Ashpole deacons, see McCallum, Historical Sketch, 15-16.

<sup>21</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 16-17 and 20-23. For a photograph, see p. 20. "The Hut" was purchased by John A. McGirt for \$1,300.

<sup>22</sup>McCallum, Historical Sketch, 28; and Robeson County Deeds, Book 16-N, pp. 204-205.

<sup>23</sup>McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 28; Robeson County Deeds, Book 3-Y, pp. 135-136. Earliest burial dates from 1865.

<sup>24</sup>Robeson County Deeds, Book 10 J, pp. 442-443.

<sup>25</sup>McCallum, Historical Sketch, 28.

<sup>26</sup>North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, Survey Branch, National Register files, Ashpole Presbyterian Church folder, "Historical Sketches" of Ashpole Church written by Lucia Mae McCallum in 1961 and 1971; and McCallum, <u>Historical Sketch</u>, 8 and 18. The Lebanon, Hamer, and McNair Memorial churches no longer exist.

<sup>27</sup>McCallum, Historical Sketch, 26-27.

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- North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, Survey Branch. National Register research files, Ashpole Presbyterian Church folder.
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- Robeson County Deeds. Microfilm copies in the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

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#### Boundary Description:

The original tract containing 6.75 acres, more or less, is described as filed and registered January 4, 1861, Book E, page 426, Robeson County Deeds:

A certain piece on tract of land lying and being in the State and County aforesain on the west side of Mitchel Creek and both sides of the road leading from Lumberton to Harllesville, Beginning at a pine above the road and runs South 45 East 8 chains and 50 links to a stake near the wells; then South 12 East 3 chains and 50 links to a stake just above said road; thence  $11\frac{1}{2}$  East 12 chains to the beginning, containing six acres and threeforths acres.

On May 8, 1937 one sixth of an acre was deeded to Ashepole Church by Mrs. Cornelia Moore Bracey, recorded in Book 8-V at Page 372:

Beginning at a stake in the center of Rowland-Little Rock Road running North 38° 45" West 442 feet to a stake, thence North 63° 30" East 15 feet to a stake, thence parallel with the line running North 38° 45" West 460 feet to a stake, thence North 79° 45" West 23 feet to the beginning.

